session during January 21-22, 2005 at Delhi to discuss the various issues related to Tsunami. More than 200 scientists from different relevant institutions including, a few experts from UNESCO, Canada, USA, Japan and Germany had also attended the session. Suggestions from countries with experience of such disasters were very well received. Based on the discussions a proposal has been formulated which includes strengthening of seismological network, deployment of Ocean based sensors, data buoys, tide gauges, communication links, R&D and public awareness.

Maritime Policy

3204. SHRI RAVI SHANKAR PRASAD:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government hae formulated a maritime policy to secure rail, road and inland waterway connectivity;

(b) if so, the broad details of the policy;

(c) the action plan of Government for the construction of dedicated rail lines for freight movement from and to ports with special reference to Paradip?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) A comprehensive policy for the Maritime Sector which includes Ports, Merchant Shipping and Inland Water Transport (IWT) is under finalization. The policy seeks to combine vision and strategy for the sector through harmonious and coordinated development of our maritime assets like ports, shipping, inland water transport systems and ship building and ship repair industries. The following objectives are sought to be realized under the policy:—

(i) Holistic development of maritime transport systems through a coordinated plan and strategies for development of port infrastructure, improvement in shipping, backward integration of the hinterland through rail, road and inland water transport connectivity, augmentation of ship building and ship repair facilities so as to emerge as an internationally competitive nation in this area by 2025.

(ii) Ensure quality service comparable with international benchmarks in Indian ports through modernization, improvement in productivity and structural reforms.

(iii) Facilitate transhipment of Indian origin/bound cargo in Indian ports.

(iv) Effect significant increase in Indian Shipping and IWT tonnage through facilitative policy interventions.

(v) Promote coastal shipping and inland water transport through a package of measures including fiscal and financial incentives.

(vi) Strengthen maritime administration and bring about regulatory framework reforms to promote good governance.

(vii) Provide level playing field to Indian stakeholders by providing fiscal regime at par with international norms and by rationalizing domestic levies.

(viii) Provide for state-of-the-art aids to navigation and requisite regulatory framework.

(ix) Encourage ship-building and ship-repair activities to become internationally competitive and emerge as a leading ship-building/ ship-repair nation by 2025.

(x) Support ship-breaking and ship-recycling activities without compromising on environmental concerns.

(xi) Stimulate private sector investment including foreign direct investment particularly for rendering services of a commercial nature in the Maritime sector, by providing conducive environment.

(xii) Promote shipping-trade interface by evolving code of conduct for supply chain players such as freight forwarders, shipping agents, multimodal transport operators and other intermediaries.

(xiii) Develop human resources in maritime sector and market them in the context of emerging global shortage of qualified personnel in the sector.

(c) Setting up of National Dedicated Freight Rail Corridor from Northern Indian hinterland to Southern India which would be linked with the various ports is invisaged in the draft policy for the Maritime Sector (Ports, Merchant Shipping and Inland Water Transport). The draft policy further envisages that the corridor would be operated in the private sector and would have its own rolling stock, locomotives, signaling system, stations etc. but will follow the standards laid down by the Railways. The policy is at draft

stage and would need the approval of the competent authority before being operationalised.

For Paradip Port, presently the Cuttack—Paradip single rail line provides the sole link between Paradip Port and its hinterland. Work on doubling of this rail line in three reaches namely, (i) Nergundi — Cuttack Raghunathpur, (ii) Raghunathpur — Rahama & (iii) Rahama — Paradip Sections, has already ben taken up. The Railways has further taken up construction of the Daitari — Banspani rail line for transport of iron ore traffic at Paradip Port. Haridaspur — Paradip rail link which is a virtual extension of the Daitari Banspani new rail link which will connect the iron ore rich belt of Banspani and Daitari sectors to Paradip Port is also under consideration.

Completion of Delhi-Gurgaon Expressway

3205. SHRI ABU ASIM AZMI:
SHRI AMAR SINGH:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government are aware that only 35 per cent of construction work has been done on the Delhi - Gurgaon Expressway which was scheduled to be completed by March, 2005 with the result thousands of commuters have been facing lot of difficulties on account of traffic jam on that road;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether it is also a fact that National Highway Authority of India is yet to acquire land from Defence Ministry and Airport Authority of India, without which the construction of the expressway cannot be completed; and

(d) if so, the details thereof and by when the land is likely to be acquired?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI K.H. MUNIYAPPA): (a) to (d) The construction work on Delhi — Gurgaon Expressway is in progress and 40% of the work has been completed. The work is slightly delayed, as the land at some locations were not handed over to National Highways Authority of India (NHAI). Recently, Ministry of Defence and Airport Authority of India